

# Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin

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## National Weather Summary December 6 - 12, 2009

**Highlights:** A major winter storm produced a variety of harsh weather conditions nearly nationwide, from heavy precipitation in **California** and the **Southwest** to flooding in the **central Gulf Coast region**. Blizzard conditions engulfed the **central Plains** and the **upper Midwest**. By week's end, snow had blanketed much of the **Intermountain West** and most areas from the **northern and central Plains into the Northeast**. Meanwhile, bitterly cold weather gripped the **northern Plains** and the **Northwest**, where weekly temperatures averaged as much as 15 to 25 degrees F below normal. At mid-week, freezes affected areas as far south as **California's San Joaquin Valley**, necessitating frost-protection measures for citrus and other temperature-sensitive crops. In stark contrast, record-setting heat prevailed for much of the week across **Florida's peninsula**. In the blizzard-affected areas of the **Plains** and **Midwest**, the storm halted fieldwork--including late-season corn harvesting--and increased stress on livestock. Post-storm temperatures plunged below -30 degrees F in parts of **Montana** and dipped well below 0 degrees F as far south as the **central Plains**. Farther south and east, weekly rainfall locally topped 8 inches in the **central Gulf Coast region** and totaled at least 2 inches from the **lower Mississippi Valley into portions of the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic States**. The rain stalled cotton harvesting and other late-autumn **Southeastern** fieldwork. Elsewhere, the storm provided beneficial moisture for pastures and rangeland in drought-affected areas of the **West**, including **California** and **Arizona**. In addition, high-elevation snow improved **California's** hydrological prospects, following a 3-year drought.

Much of the **West** experienced alternating periods of cold and wet weather during the week. On December 6, **Western** daily-record lows included -6 degrees F in **Eureka, NV**; 20 degrees F in **Redding, CA**; and 32 degrees F in **San Luis Obispo, CA**. The following day, rainfall records for December 7 were broken in **California** locations such as **San Diego** (1.56 inches) and **Ontario** (1.07 inches). In **western Colorado**, December 7-8 snowfall reached 42 inches at **Coal Bank Pass** and 46 inches near **Crested Butte**. **Flagstaff, AZ** (20.1 inches on December 7), experienced its snowiest calendar day since February 24, 1987, when 21.1 inches fell. **Redding** (18 and 16 degrees F) set additional record lows on December 8-9, along with an all-time-record low on the latter date (previously, 17 degrees F on January 20, 1937, and December 21, 1990). Other daily-record lows on December 8 in **California's Sacramento Valley** included 19 degrees F in **Red Bluff** and 23 degrees F in **Sacramento**. Meanwhile, **Seattle, WA** (19, 18, 16, and 21 degrees F), tallied four consecutive daily-record lows from December 8-11. Similarly, **Portland, OR** (12, 13, and 14 degrees F), collected a trio of daily-record lows from December 9-11. Farther inland, temperatures plunged below -30 degrees F and established daily records in several locations, including **Cut Bank, MT** (-34 degrees F on December 8), and **Bryce Canyon Airport, UT** (-31 degrees F on December 9). In parts of the **West**, temperatures fell to the lowest levels in nearly two decades. For example, **Elko, NV** (-22 degrees F on December 9), noted its lowest reading since December

30, 1990, when the temperature dipped to -25 degrees F. Similarly, **Pocatello, ID** (-17 degrees F on December 10), experienced its coldest weather since February 28, 1993, when it was also -17 degrees F. On December 9, temperatures across the **Lower 48 States** ranged from -37 degrees F at **Sixth Crossing, WY**, to 90 degrees F in **West Palm Beach, FL**. The latter reading was a monthly record, tying **West Palm Beach's** 90-degree reading on December 5, 1941. A monthly record was also tied in **Miami** (89 degrees F on December 10), where the former standard had been established on December 13, 1900, and December 3, 1902. After mid-week, stormy weather returned to parts of the **West**. In **California**, daily-record rainfall totals included 0.75 inch (on December 10) in **Bakersfield**; 0.84 inch (on December 11) in **Fresno**; and 0.97 inch (on December 12) in **Burbank**. From December 11-13, snowfall in **Utah's Wasatch Range** reached 54 inches at **Brighton Crest** and 42 inches at **Alta**. Even typically arid **Reno, NV**, received 9.0 inches of snow on December 6-7 and 5.3 inches on December 11-12.

Farther east, generally light snow affected parts of the **Plains** and **Midwest** on December 6, although daily-record totals were reported in locations such as **Scottsbluff, NE** (7.3 inches), and **Concordia, KS** (2.0 inches). More significant and widespread snow arrived on December 8, when record-setting daily totals included 12.0 inches in **Concordia**; 10.6 inches in **Des Moines, IA**; and 10.5 inches in **Hastings, NE**. In **Wisconsin**, **Madison** set daily snowfall records on both December 8 and 9, totaling 14.1 inches. Other snowfall records for December 9 reached 11.2 inches in **Green Bay, WI**, and 7.3 inches in **Albany, NY**. In **Grand Rapids, MI**, the minimum barometric pressure fell to 977 millibars (28.86 inches of mercury) on December 9, setting a monthly record (previously, 979 millibars, or 28.92 inches, on December 13, 1965). High winds accompanied the storm, with gusts frequently topping 50 m.p.h. in the blizzard-affected areas and exceeding 60 m.p.h. from the **lower Great Lakes region into parts of the Northeast**. **Omaha, NE**, received 10.3 inches of snow from December 7-9, and clocked a peak gust to 52 m.p.h. on the middle date. Farther east, December 9 wind gusts reached 68 m.p.h. in **Franklin, PA**, and 61 m.p.h. in **Akron-Canton, OH**. In the storm's wake, late-week snowfall downwind of **Lake Ontario** locally totaled more than 3 feet in the snow belt of **western New York**, while **Ironwood, MI**, received 22.1 inches of snow in a 24-hour period on December 9-10. Meanwhile, daily-record lows for December 9 on the **Plains** included -26 degrees F in **Alliance, NE**, and -8 degrees F in **Russell, KS**. The following day, **Russell** dipped to -9 degrees F, while **Gage, OK**, reported a daily-record low of 1 degree F. Farther east, daily-record rainfall totals for December 9 reached 2.28 inches in **Wilmington, DE**; 2.13 inches in **Philadelphia, PA**; and 1.96 inches in **Newark, NJ**. At week's end, heavy rain erupted in the **central Gulf Coast region**, where **New Orleans (Audubon Park), LA**, netted 7.22 inches on December 12. At the nearby **New Orleans International Airport**, 5.26 inches fell on December 12, boosting its month-to-date sum to a December-record 13.47 inches (previously, 10.77 inches in 1967).

*National Weather Summary provided by USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board.  
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## **Agricultural Summary**

### **December 7 – 13, 2009**

**Highlights:** Cooler than normal temperatures prevailed across most of the country during the week, while southern Florida experienced temperatures 6 degrees or more above normal. Temperatures dipped 15 degrees or more below normal across much of the Pacific Coast, through the upper Four Corners, and northwestward into central Nebraska. Through the Nation's midsection, minimal rainfall was received. In contrast, Arizona and California received between 2 and 4 inches of rain with up to 8 inches falling in the San Joaquin Valley. With the exception of southern Florida, the eastern half of the country received up to 2 inches of rain with some areas in the Delta and Tennessee receiving over 4 inches.

**Corn:** Nationally, corn harvest advanced 4 points during the week to 92 percent complete by December 13. Harvest was most active in Colorado, the Dakotas, and Wisconsin where dry conditions allowed farmers to harvest between 7 and 9 percent of their acreage.

**Cotton:** Producers had harvested 91 percent of the Nation's cotton crop by week's end. Harvest was most active in Kansas during the week, with producers harvesting 16 percent of their acreage. In contrast, rain hindered harvest activities in Alabama where harvest remains well behind normal.

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